



NURTURING CHILD & ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH

Project AWARE

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Module: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Middle childhood, usually defined as ages 6 to 12, is a period where children display significant gains in their development. This video provides an overview of three developmental domains in middle childhood: physical, cognitive, and socioemotional development.

Research-based strategies on how caregivers can best support and nurture children's development are also featured in this video.

Interested in jumping to a particular topic? Below are timestamps for topics addressed:

- 01:00 - How children develop
- 03:53 - Physical development, outdoor play
- 05:20 - Screen time
- 08:50 - Cognitive development, multiple intelligences
- 11:34 - How parents can support children's schooling
- 16:05 - Socioemotional development
- 17:03 - How to adapt parenting style to best support adolescents
- 20:35 - Summary of the three domains of development





Screen Time

The video talks about how caregivers can moderate children's increased screen time. Aside from the strategies mentioned in the video, you may also visit www.healthychildren.org for more information on managing not only your child's screen time, but also the entire family's. On this website, you will also find a helpful media time calculator, as well as family media plans that you can print out and post for your household to see.

On the website, click the Family Life tab on top, then click Media. On the search bar on the top right side, type "Media Plan" and you will see the articles

Module: ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Adolescence is defined as the period of transition between childhood and adulthood. In this video, we talked about how adolescents think and behave so adults can better understand them. The video also includes best practices on how adults and caregivers can support adolescents' decision-making skills and identity development.

Interested in jumping to a particular topic? Below are timestamps for topics addressed:

- 01:25 - Brain development
- 02:48 - Decision-making steps and risk-taking behaviors
- 06:56 - Why and how parents can help
- 10:22 - Identity development
- 11:48 - Family transitions and parental monitoring
- 16:03 - How to address parent-teen conflict



Decision-Making Skills

The video talks about six steps that can guide adolescents in their decision-making. Below is the summary of steps that you can use as a reference as you watch the video.

1. Identify and define the problem.
2. List all the possible options or alternatives pertaining to the problem.
3. Evaluate the consequences for each option.
4. Evaluate the desirability of each consequence.
5. Combine everything, choose an option, and make a plan accordingly.

For more information about decision-making, as well as some recommended strategies on how teens and parents can solve problems cooperatively, you may visit <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/HYG-5301>.



Parenting Styles

The video mentioned parenting styles and its two components, responsiveness and demandingness. The list below provides an overview of the four different parenting styles and how they differ in terms of level of responsiveness and demandingness, as well as the common associated child outcomes for each parenting style.

- **Authoritative - high responsiveness, high demandingness**
 - Parents who are authoritative have high but reasonable expectations. They are also supportive in that they have clear rules and help their children so they can attain those expectations.
 - Children often have good levels of self-esteem, better social skills, and are less likely to demonstrate school delinquency.
- **Authoritarian - low responsiveness, high demandingness**
 - Authoritarian parents have high expectations and strict rules, expecting their children to obey without negotiation. They also tend to show less warmth toward their children.
 - Children often have lower self-esteem and poorer social skills. They also tend to experience higher levels of anxiety and other mental health concerns.
- **Uninvolved - low responsiveness, low demandingness**
 - Parents who are uninvolved, or neglectful, do not provide any rules or expectations for their child. They are usually indifferent and unresponsive to the child's needs.
 - Children tend to have impulsive behavior, demonstrate higher levels of delinquency and substance abuse later in life.
- **Permissive - high responsiveness, low demandingness**
 - Permissive, or indulgent parents tend to be very warm and lenient, with very few rules and expectations. A structure at home is also usually lacking.
 - Children tend to display impulsive behavior, have poorer social skills, and lack self-discipline.



Module: CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

This video provides an overview of children's mental health and parenting strategies to support the mental health and wellbeing of your children. The difference between mental health and mental disorders, the mental health continuum, and parenting strategies for supporting children's mental health are discussed.

Interested in jumping to a particular topic? Below are timestamps for topics addressed:

- 00:58 - Children's mental health defined
- 01:53 - Mental disorders in children defined
- 04:41 - Mental health continuum
- 10:10 - The importance of seeking care for mental disorders
- 14:10 - Caregiving strategies that foster mental health



Strategy 1: (Dis)connecting as a family

Having all devices turned in at the end of the day to a place where adults can monitor their use and the devices can be charged.

It is well documented that electronics in bedrooms, especially late at night, can put children at serious risk for experiencing mental distress. While a child may know how to operate a smartphone or tablet, they do not yet have the developmental capability to know when to turn it off, what sites to definitely stay off of, and who to not share personal information with.

Limiting device use time to hours in the day

For example, only from 8am-5pm or later for older children

Set a daily time limit.

For younger children, who may have unlimited access to devices –set a limit. Start with something 60 minutes per day and set a timer to keep track of their use time. That way when the timer goes off (or the internal device timer shuts the tablet down), it's time for technology to be put away.

Another strategy is to have children earn device time. For example, once you have finished your math homework, you can have 30 minutes of device time. This teaches important structure and balance that can be carried forward into other life tasks as children mature.

Connect as a family.

With the time you have freed up - dedicate an evening or time to enjoy your family. Perhaps a family dinner, movie, board game, or outdoor adventure.

Strategy 2: Taking care of you

Taking care of yourself is an effective way to manage your own well-being and allow you to have the available resources to help your child when they are struggling. We can all think of a time where we might have lost our cool with a loved one or child. Maybe we yelled or slammed a door out of frustration. During these moments we are dysregulated –and we're HUMAN –this is going to happen.

What we do have control over is how we respond to the frustrations and challenges in our lives. We can choose to become angry and frustrated and act on those feelings, or we can choose to give ourselves a moment to feel angry and frustrated and instead of acting on those feelings we can choose to cope with the feelings instead of act.

It's okay to take a moment for you, to regulate. Here are a few suggestions for coping with difficult situations:

- Deep breathing
 - The fastest way to calm the body is through the breath!
- Taking time away from the difficulty before returning to it
 - 5 minutes, 5 hours, take what you need!
- Reaching out for support
 - Social support is critical. Reach out to understanding family or friends
 - If support is hard to come by, SD 211 is a tremendous resource:
<https://www.helplinecenter.org/>



Strategy 3: Praise vs Encouragement

	Praise	Encouragement
Dictionary Definition	1. To express favorable judgment of 2. To glorify, especially by attribution of perfection 3. An expression of approval	1. To inspire with courage 2. To spur on; stimulate
Addresses	The doer; "Good girl"	The deed; "Well done"
Recognizes	Only complete, perfect product; "You did it right."	Effort and improvement: "You gave it your best." or "How do you feel about what you accomplished?"
Attitude	Patronizing, manipulative. "I like the way Suzie is sitting."	Respectful, appreciative: "Who can show me how we should be sitting now?"
"I" message	Judgmental: "I like the way you did that."	Self-directing: "I appreciate your cooperation."
Invites	Children to change for others. Approval junkies.	Children to change for themselves. Inner direction.
Locus of control	External: What do others think?	Internal: What do I think?
Teaches	What to think. Dependence on the evaluation of others.	How to think. Self-evaluation.
Goal	Conformity. "You did it right."	Understanding. "What do you think/learn/feel?"
Effect on sense of worth	Feel worthwhile when others approve	Feel worthwhile without the approval of others
Long-term effect	Dependence of others	Self-confidence, self-reliance

Adapted from *Positive Discipline in the Classroom* (2013) and *Positive Discipline A-Z* (2007) by Jane Nelsen and Lyn Lott



Strategy 4: Reflecting Feelings

Before we redirect behavior or offer a solution - it's important to help our children feel heard. A quick way to do this is to reflect the emotions we hear our children expressing - even if we do not agree with them. This is not about being right or wrong and is about helping our child feel understood.

Unlike adults, children are less likely to express their feelings verbally. It will take observation skills, including paying close attention to the child's face, to discern feelings and make reflective response.

Here are some examples of reflection of feeling:

- You are feeling frustrated.
- That was scary to you
- You are so excited with your performance!

Try not to worry about getting it exactly right, kids are wise and will let us know if we got it wrong. Or, they might notice you are responding differently to them and tell you you are wrong. Stick with it. Reflecting feelings is a valuable tool for many relationships in our lives.